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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3410  
INFO SECDEF WASHDC  
JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
USCINCSO MIAMI FL  
AMEMBASSY PANAMA  
AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
AMEMBASSY QUITO  
AMEMBASSY LIMA  
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ  
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 007805

E.O. 12958: DECL: 8/28/11  
TAGS: [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [CO](#)  
SUBJECT: UPDATE ON OPERATION SEVENTH OF AUGUST

REF: BOGOTA 7555

CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR ANNE W. PATTERSON; REASONS 1.5  
(B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) AS REPORTED REFTTEL, ON AUGUST 17 THE COLOMBIAN MILITARY LAUNCHED A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL JOINT ARMY/AIR FORCE OPERATION TO DESTROY MOBILE FARC UNITS SEEKING TO ATTACK MILITARY TARGETS IN META AND GUAVIARE DEPARTMENTS. ON AUGUST 27, FARC SUPREME MILITARY COMMANDER "MONO JOJOY" PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT ALIAS "URIAS CUELLAR," HIS RIGHT-HAND MILITARY STRATEGIST HAD BEEN KILLED BY THE ARMY. ALTHOUGH "JOJOY" DOWNPLAYED THE NUMBER OF FARC CASUALTIES, THE ARMY HAS RECOVERED THE BODIES OF AT LEAST 20 FARC COMBATANTS. THERE ARE CREDIBLE REPORTS THAT THE BODIES OF AT LEAST ANOTHER 80 FARC COMBATANTS WERE BURIED OR HIDDEN BY FARC UNITS AS THEY FLED FROM ARMY PURSUIT.

¶2. (C) ARMED FORCES COMMANDER GEN. TAPIAS HAS ANNOUNCED THAT OPERATION "SEVENTH OF AUGUST" WILL CONTINUE AS THE ARMY PURSUES AND ENCIRCLES REMNANTS OF THE FARC COLUMNS, NUMBERING SOME 1,300 FARC REGULARS. ARMY COMMANDER GENERAL MORA ORDERED AN ADDITIONAL 500 TROOPS COMMITTED TO THE OPERATION; THESE TROOPS ARE NOW POSTED AT STRATEGIC LOCATIONS DESIGNED TO PREVENT ELEMENTS OF THE FARC FORCE FROM ESCAPING BACK TO THE FARC DEMILITARIZED ZONE ("ZONA DE DESPEJE"). SOME FARC REGULARS ARE SPLITTING INTO SMALL GROUPS IN AN EFFORT TO EVADE DETECTION.

¶3. (C) MILITARY SOURCES ADD THAT CURRENT EFFORTS ARE FOCUSING ON PSYOPS DESIGNED TO ENCOURAGE THE FARC COMBATANTS TO SURRENDER. THESE OPERATIONS CONSIST MAINLY OF DROPPING LEAFLETS ARGUING THAT IT IS BETTER TO SURRENDER TO THE MILITARY, WHO TAKES GOOD CARE OF ITS PRISONERS, THAN BE KILLED IN ACTION. FARC MORALE IN THE AREA IS REPORTEDLY LOW, AND THE COLOMBIAN MILITARY IS ATTEMPTING TO PRESS ITS ADVANTAGE. FARC COMBATANTS ARE SAID TO BE STARVING AS A RESULT OF THE MILITARY'S SEIZURE EARLY IN THE OPERATION OF AT LEAST EIGHT TONS OF RATIONS DESTINED FOR THEM; AS MANY AS 30 GUERRILLAS HAVE ALREADY DESERTED, ACCORDING TO INTELLIGENCE SOURCES.

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COMMENT:  
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¶4. (C) BY ALL ACCOUNTS, OPERATION "SEVENTH OF AUGUST" WILL LIKELY TURN OUT TO BE THE COLOMBIAN ARMED FORCES MOST SUCCESSFUL OPERATION AGAINST THE FARC IN RECENT YEARS. AS THE ARMY CONTINUES TO ENCIRCLE THE FLEEING FARC REGULARS AND THEIR FOOD SUPPLIES CONTINUE TO DWINDLE, THE ARMY'S PSYOPS SHOULD PAY DIVIDENDS AS FARC SOLDIERS COME OUT OF THE BUSH TO SURRENDER.

¶5. (C) THERE ARE REPORTS FROM SEVERAL FARC SOLDIERS WHO SURRENDERED EARLIER THAT THERE ARE MANY FARC WOMEN AND MINORS AMONG THOSE WISHING TO SURRENDER. IF, IN FACT, A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF MINORS SURRENDER, THIS OPERATION

COULD DEAL ANOTHER MAJOR BLOW TO THE FARC'S INTERNATIONAL  
IMAGE. AT THE SAME TIME, THIS OPERATION IS BEING  
CONDUCTED IN TERRAIN THAT MIGHT PERMIT THE GUERRILLAS TO  
SLIP THROUGH THE ARMY'S BLOCKING POSITIONS AND THUS ALLOW  
THE FARC COMBATANTS TO RETURN TO THEIR SANCTUARY IN THE  
DESPEJE.

PATTERSON

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